

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 MCT-01 SSM-03 /085 W
-----142334Z 044654 /71

R 141558Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1323
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 308

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PLO, SY
SUBJECT: STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF PNC REMAINS UNRESOLVED

1. SUMMARY: PALESTINE CENTRAL COUNCIL MET JAN. 11 IN
DAMASCUS BUT FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON EXPANSION OF PNC
AND DATE IT WILL CONVENE IN FEBRUARY. PCC WILL MEET AGAIN
JAN. 22 TO MAKE FURTHER ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN CONSENSUS ON THESE
ISSUES. FAHUM STRESSED IN INTERVIEW THAT PNC WILL BE CON-
VENED IN FEB., BUT SAIQA LEADER MUHSIN REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT
UNTIL LATER DATE. FAHUM EXPECTS THERE WILL BE CHANGES IN
PLO EXCOMM. PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP STILL CLEARLY IN DISARRAY.
END SUMMARY.

2. PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL MET IN DAMASCUS JAN. 11 FOR SEVEN
HOURS BUT REPORTEDLY FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON EXPANSION
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OF PNC AND DATE IT WILL CONVENE IN FEBRUARY. DAMASCUS
RADIO (NC120958Y) AND VOP CLANDESTINE RADIO (JN121708Y)
BROADCAST NEARLY SIMILAR "OFFICIAL" VERSIONS OF MEETING,
ALTHOUGH DAMASCUS BROADCAST CITED AS ITS SOURCE PNC
CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM WHEREAS VOP REFERRED TO MEETING
"ATTENDED BY ABU AMMAR AND MEMBERS OF PLO EXCOMM,"
RELLECTING SOME DEGREE OF RESIDUAL TENSION BETWEEN SYRIAN-

BACKED FAHUM AND ARAFAT. VOP TEXT REPORTED THAT PCC HAD "REVIEWED RESULTS ATTAINED BY PREPARATORY COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH FORMING NEW PNC AND...IT WAS AGREED THAT PCC WILL MEET ON JAN. 22 IN DAMASCUS TO COMPLETE FORMATION OF PNC AND TO SET PRECISE DATE FOR ITS CONVOCATION."

3. FAHUM ADDED FURTHER DETAILS IN INTERVIEW WITH AL-THAWRAH PUBLISHED JANUARY 13: (A) MEETING DID NOT DEAL WITH FORMATION OF PROVISIONAL PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT, (B) COMPOSITION OF PLO EXCOMM AND NUMBER OF ITS MEMBERS IS DECISION FOR PNC ALONE, (C) URGENT NEED EXISTS TO ACHIEVE MORE COOPERATION AMONG SYRIA, EGYPT, AND THE PLO. HE REITERATED PCC "EAGERNESS" TO IMPLEMENT RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMIT DECISIONS PLUS 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT AND ITS ANNEXES, AND CALLED FOR "BOOSTING" LEBANESE PEACE EFFORTS AND SYRO-PALESTINAIN COORDINATION IN LEBANON. FAHUM REITERATED HE STILL EXPECTED PNC TO CONVENE BEFORE END OF FEBRUARY.

4. EMBOFF TOLD BY U.S. JOURNALIST WHO MET WITH ZUHAYR MUHSIN AFTER PCC MEETING THAT MUHSIN CONFIRMED HE STILL DEMANDING POSTPONEMENT OF PNC MEETING UNTIL MAY WHEN SESSION WOULD HAVE MORE WEIGHT BECAUSE IT WOULD OCCUR AFTER ISRAELI ELECTIONS AND AFTER NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S ME POLICY HAD BECOME CLEARER. HE TOLD CORRESPONDENT THAT WHILE HE DID NOT ASPIRE TO CHAIRMANSHIP OF NEW PLO EXCOMM BECAUSE HE "DID NOT POSSESS NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS." HE FELT PLO IN PRESENT DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE ARAFAT'S LEADERSHIP WAS "ILLEGITIMATE." LOCAL SYRIAN STRINGER WHO WAS PRESENT ADDED THAT ARAFAT HAD NOT MET WITH ASAD BEFORE
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OR AFTER PCC MEETING AS FAR AS HIS SOURCES KNEW, BUT HAD RETURNED DIRECTLY TO BEIRUT AFTER EARLY MORNING ADJOURNMENT.

5. FAHUM TOLD FRENCH JOURNALIST HE EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN PLO EXCOMM WHEN PNC MET. FRENCH EMBOFF BELIEVES THIS MEANS FAHUM EXPECTS QADDUMI TO BE REPLACED. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER JOURNALIST, WESTERN HEMISPHERE REPRESENTATION OF EIGHT MEMBERS OF NEW PNC WAS AGREED TO -- FOUR FROM USA, ONE FROM CANADA AND THREE FROM LATIN AMERICA. HE ALSO SAID COUNCIL WAS LEANING TOWARD HAVING WEST BANK REPRESENTED BY EXPELLEES RATHER THAN FACE DIFFICULTIES OF SELECTING CURRENT WEST BANK REPRESENTATIVES WHO WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE OCCUPIED TERRITORY FOR MEETINGS AND FACE RISK OF NOT BEING ALLOWED TO RETURN.

6. COMMENT: PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP STILL CLEARLY DIVIDED OVER SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF PNC WITH AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF RESISTANCE GROUPS UNWILLING TO ACCEPT FAHUM/PREPARATORY COMMITTEE PROPOSALS FOR REDUCTION

OF THEIR PROPORTIONAL WEIGHT IN NEW COUNCIL. WE
SURMISE FROM FAHUM'S COMMENTS THIS ISSUE WAS SUFFICIENTLY
CONTENTIOUS THAT OTHER QUESTIONS, SUCH AS GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE,
WERE NOT DISCUSSED.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Sent Date: 14-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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